DULWICH COLLEGE
FOUNDED 1619

**ASTHMA POLICY**

**Introduction**

The College welcomes all pupils with asthma and aims to support these pupils in participating fully in school life.

Dulwich College recognises that asthma is a widespread, serious but controllable condition. It occurs when a person with asthma encounters something that irritates the airways (an asthma trigger), which affects the airways to the lungs causing shortness of breath, cough tightness in the chest and wheeze.

All pupils with asthma should always have immediate access to their inhalers:

- **Reliever inhalers -** used when needed to quickly relieve asthma symptoms for a short time; they are usually blue inhalers.
- **Preventor inhaler** - used every day to prevent asthma symptoms happening, usually taken morning and night. Pupils should not bring their preventor to school as it should be taken regularly at home; pupils should bring on a residential trip.
- **Maintenance and reliever therapy (MART) inhaler** - this is combination inhaler of preventor and reliever medication.

Pupils with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in all activities. They should carry their reliever or MART inhaler on their person while in the College, as soon as they are responsible to do so and it is expected that this should happen from Year 7. Pupils should be responsible to carry their inhaler to sporting activities on and off site, and on trips. Pupils in Year 6 and below will have a spare reliever inhaler kept at DUCKS, and the Junior School. Staff will take the spare inhalers on trips and to all sports activities (that leave the school site) on the behalf of DUCKS and Junior School pupils. If they travel from home to an offsite activity, then all pupils should bring their inhaler from home to have on their person.

**Personalised asthma action plans (PAAP's)**

Parent / carers must provide a PAAP if their child has a diagnosis of asthma. These plans need to be updated before the start of each academic year, and this will be asked for in the annual medical update. Pupils diagnosed with asthma should also have an annual asthma review at their GP practice, where their PAAP can be updated if necessary and any changes communicated to the Medical Centre.

**Emergency treatment and emergency asthma inhalers**

Asthma is a common medical condition in the UK. An acute asthma episode is a medical emergency, so staff need to know how to recognise and treat an acute asthma attack at school. They should use the pupil's own inhaler if available, or an emergency asthma inhaler which are prominently located around the College (see locations site map in appendix).

An emergency salbutamol inhaler should normally only be used by children:

- for whom written parental consent for use of the emergency inhaler has been given,
- who have been diagnosed with asthma and prescribed an inhaler, or
- who have been prescribed an inhaler as reliever medication.

However, it may be administered outside these guidelines if deemed appropriate by the College Medical Officer.

**Asthma Attacks and Emergency Management**

**The signs of an asthma attack (there may be all these signs and symptoms or just some of them):**

- Persistent cough (when at rest).
- A wheezing sound coming from the chest (when at rest).
- Difficulty breathing (breathing fast and with effort, using all accessory muscles in the upper body).
- Nasal flaring.
- Not able to talk or complete sentences. Some children will go incredibly quiet.
- May complain of chest feeling tight (younger children may express this as tummy ache).

If a pupil is showing these symptoms staff should follow the guidance below for responding to an asthma attack.

**However, there is a need to call an ambulance immediately if the pupil:**

- Appears exhausted;
- Has a blue/white tinge around lips;
- Is going blue; OR
- Has collapsed.

**In the event of an asthma attack:**

- Ask someone urgently to call the Medical Centre to inform them that a child is having an asthma attack.
- Sit the child up leaning slightly forward– try to keep calm and reassure them.

- Use the child's own inhaler reliever / MART (combined Maintenance and Reliever Therapy) (see instructions below) - if not available, use the College's emergency blue reliever inhaler and spacer.

**Advice for use of a blue reliever inhaler (either the pupil's own or the emergency one)**

Follow the pupil's emergency asthma action plan or in its absence:

1. Take one puff of the blue reliever inhaler via a spacer every 30-60 seconds up to 10 puffs
2. If there is no improvement or the pupil appears to feel worse at any point call 999 for an ambulance
3. If the ambulance has not arrived after 10 minutes and there is no improvement, repeat step 1
4. If symptoms are no better after repeating step 1, and the ambulance has still not arrived, **call 999 again** immediately**.**

**If you do not have blue reliever inhaler, call 999 straight away.**

**Advice for use of a MART Inhaler**

Follow the pupil's emergency asthma action plan or in its absence:

1. Take one puff of their MART inhaler every 1 to 3 minutes up to 6 puffs.
2. If you feel worse or at any point OR you do not feel better after 6 puffs, call 999 for an ambulance
3. If the ambulance has not arrived after 10 minutes and symptoms are not improving, repeat step 2
4. If your symptoms are no better after repeating step 2, and the ambulance has still not arrived, contact 999 again immediately.

**If you do not have a MART inhaler, use the emergency blue reliever inhaler following advice for a blue inhaler above.**

**If no access to either call 999 straight away.**

**Key points for a viral induced wheeze in College**

1. College staff can administer inhalers if they have been prescribed

- If a GP has prescribed a reliever inhaler (usually Salbutamol) staff can and should administer it, even without an asthma diagnosis
- The medication must be:
  - In the original pharmacy packaging;

- Clearly labelled with the pupil's name; and
- Accompanied by written parental consent

2. The College will request an Individual Health Care plan

- Even without asthma, the College will request an Individual health Care Plan. This outlines:
  - Symptoms (e.g. wheeze during colds);
  - When to give the inhaler;
  - Dosage and frequency; and
  - When to escalate (e.g. call parents or emergency services).

3. Emergency Inhalers in schools

- Schools in England are allowed to keep spare emergency inhalers; the following rules apply:
  - It is **only for children diagnosed with asthma OR who have been prescribed an inhaler**
  - So, a pupil with viral induced wheeze can ONLY use it if they already have a prescription

4. No diagnosis +/or support

- The key requirement is that there is a prescription for an inhaler and clear instructions; the pupil does not need to have been specifically diagnosed with "asthma".

**Further Information**

**Locations of emergency asthma inhalers onsite:** **Dulwich College Campus Map.pdf**

Asthma | Asthma + Lung UK

https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/asthma-attacks/

**Asthma intranet page:**
**https://dulwichcollege.sharepoint.com/sites/MedicalCentre/SitePages/Emergency-Asthma-Inhaler-Kit.aspx**

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| **Policy Owner:** | Deputy Master Co-curricular, Operations and Partnerships |
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| **Date of Next Review:** | Academic Year 2027 – 28 (or earlier if required) |